

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 471
By: Ellis
Government Efficiency & Reform
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, open meetings law requires tape recordings of public meetings, an analog technology that was fitting at the time these provisions were first adopted. However, interested parties point out that as digital recording technologies have become widespread, the statutory requirement to produce tape recordings is no longer practical or cost-effective and has become burdensome. The parties also note that it has become increasingly difficult for governmental bodies to purchase tape recording supplies and equipment or to train employees in their use and that it is impractical for governmental bodies to store, reproduce, and distribute to the public such records using a nearly obsolete technology.

The parties assert that the use of modern technology would significantly improve the capacity of governmental bodies to share and distribute public information. S.B. 471 seeks to update open meetings law to expand the options for recording procedures subject to open meetings law.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 471 amends the Government Code to define "recording" as a tangible medium on which audio or a combination of audio and video is recorded, including a disc, tape, wire, film, electronic storage drive, or other medium now existing or later developed, and to revise open meetings law relating to the recording of certain open meetings to conform to that definition.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.